



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



### SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETS

The South Dakota Veterans Commission met October 8 in Hot Springs. VAHCS Directors Steven DiStasio (VABHHCS) and Darwin Goodspeed (SFVAHCS) briefed commissioners on new programs and services provided by the VA, current trends per war era, services contracted out, and future projects.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman, Deputy Secretary Pollard and MJFSVH Superintendent Brad Richardson briefed the Commission on Operation RAV, legislative session, CTVSO vacancies, procedures to handle veteran complaints, claims statistics, appeals, going digital, adjudication, culture of change, and status of the construction of the new state veterans home.

James Dodds briefed the Commission on the Vet Centers and Jeff Norris, 7th Circuit Chief Court Services, briefed the Commission on Veterans Court.

Cemetery updates were provided by BHNC Director Srey Austin and Orlando Morrison for the Sicangu Akicita Owicahe Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Cemetery.

Mike Birnbaum (Rapid City) was elected chairman of the Commission and Jim Ross (Whitewood) was named vice chairman.

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Commissioners (L to R): K.C. Russell, Lori Vosika, Mike Birnbaum, Helen Parr, Jim Ross and John Noyes.

Heroes Among Us—  
showcasing 125 South Dakota  
veterans.



## STATE VETERANS HOME HOSTS APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AND VETERANS COMMISSION



Staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home had the opportunity to showcase the construction of the new veterans home last week as well as review on-going improvements that have been made on the campus.

Both the South Dakota Veterans Commission and the Appropriations Committee were on campus.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman and MJFSVH Superintendent Brad Richardson guided the groups and responded to questions the groups brought forward.

We encourage everyone to continue to check out the progress of the home via our web cam (<http://www.truelook.com/clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/>). Windows are in and siding is going up!!!!!!



## PARR NAMED TO SD VETERANS COMMISSION

Governor Daugaard names Helen Parr (Sioux Falls) to the South Dakota Veterans Commission. Parr served in the U.S. Army from 1967-1969.

Parr is a member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and 40et8.

Parr has dedicated her life to serving and assisting South Dakota's veterans. She has been recognized nationally, regionally, and locally for her commitment to veterans.

Parr replaces Wade Hubbard, who was appointed to the Commission in 2008. Our special thanks to Wade for his service to the Commission and a special welcome to Helen. Her lifetime of attributes will be a great asset to the Commission.





## 1742ND SOLDIERS WELCOMED HOME FROM AFGHANISTAN

Hundreds of family members, friends and communities gathered at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, Tuesday, Oct. 7, to welcome home 162 soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1742nd Transportation Company. The ceremony was held to honor the Sioux Falls and Flandreau-based unit's return from a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The soldiers received a rock star welcome as they entered the sports complex's arena floor to music and a roaring crowd.

"What a great way to welcome home the soldiers of the 1742nd," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "I almost thought to myself 'They're rock stars.' That's the way it should be. Well, the 1742nd is better than rock stars." Daugaard, along with Congresswoman Kristi Noem, Flandreau city council member Dan Sutton and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, all took the opportunity to congratulate the unit for successfully accomplishing its mission.

The 1742nd deployed in December to provide transportation and convoy security support, perform various supply and service functions and drawdown military bases throughout the country.

While in Afghanistan, the majority of the 1742nd was stationed at Kandahar Airfield in Kandahar Province - with some soldiers periodically stationed at other bases throughout the country. The unit conducted 50 tactical convoy missions, leading 27 of them, while driving more than 107,000 miles. They moved more than 1,113 tons of supplies that provided logistical sustainment to U.S. and coalition forces, and more than 3,710 tons of equipment. The 1742nd assisted in the closedown and retrograde of 10 forward operating bases in Regional Command - South and accounted for the turn-in of more than \$74 million of unit equipment. The unit's soldiers were often the last U.S. forces to stand where the bases once were, as they hauled away the last pieces of equipment.



The unit also supported supply and service functions with personnel located in three regional areas throughout the country; running warehouses, receiving and shipping points, fuel and ammo points and managing commodities such as food and water, petroleum, repair parts and major items like tanks, vehicles and rocket launchers.

To keep the 1742nd operating at such a high level, the unit's maintenance section logged over 8,300 maintenance man-hours and maintained an operational readiness rating of 98 percent on 101 pieces of equipment. They also provided vehicle recovery support for convoys within the unit.

The 1742nd's Unit Movement Operations team operated an empty container control point; where containers were inspected, repaired and marked for seaworthy transport back to the United States, theater reuse or scrap - saving \$32 million.

For all the missions and accomplishments of the 1742nd, 17 Bronze Star Medals and 134 Army Commendation Medals were awarded for personnel service and actions.

Of the 162 soldiers that deployed with the unit, 43 volunteered from surrounding units in South Dakota including the 740th Transportation Company, 200th Engineer Company, 109th Regional Support Group, 115th Brigade Signal Company, Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, 147th Forward Support Company, 153rd Forward Support Company and the 730th Area Support Medical Company.

As the deployment ends, soldiers look forward to going home to see their families and reflect on the "second family" they made while overseas.

## STAFF CHANGES AT MJF STATE VETERANS HOME

The MJFSVH welcomes two new employees to the team.

Amelia (Amy) Spears will be working in the main office with Barb Beery. Amy comes to us from the Fall River Healthcare system.

Heather Schroeder will be working part-time in our business office. Please welcome Heather when you see her. Heather is a small business owner in the Hot Springs area.

## SCHEDULE FOR FLU VACCINES AT VABHHC FACILITIES

The VA Black Hills Health Care System's (VABHHCS) will be offering seasonal flu vaccine clinics for enrolled veterans at the following locations. Veterans are asked to bring their VA identification card to any of the walk-in clinics.

Thursday, October 23, 2014

7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Rapid City Community Based Outpatient Clinic  
3625 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Rapid City

Thursday, October 23, 2014

8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hot Springs VA Medical Center  
Urgent Care area, Room AO 48

Friday, October 24, 2014

7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Rapid City Community Based Outpatient Clinic  
3625 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Rapid City

Friday, October 24, 2014

8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Fort Meade VA Medical Center

Friday, October 24, 2014

8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hot Springs VA Medical Center  
Urgent Care area, Room AO 48

Saturday, October 25, 2014

7:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Fort Meade VA Medical Center



**SPECIAL NOTE:** If clinics are not convenient Veterans can receive a flu shot during a regularly scheduled appointment.

## HEROES AMONG US

Michael J. Fitzmaurice, a native of Jamestown, North Dakota, joined the United States Army and by March 23, 1971, was serving as a Specialist Four in Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.

During a firefight in Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, Fitzmaurice smothered the blast of an enemy-thrown explosive charge with his flak vest and body to protect other soldiers. Seriously wounded



and partially blinded by the blast, he then continued to fight the enemy. After his rifle was damaged by a second explosive blast, Fitzmaurice proceeded to acquire another rifle from a Viet Cong sapper, defeating him with his bare hands, and continued to fight, refusing medical evacuation.

Michael survived his wounds and on October 15, 1973, President Nixon awarded him the Medal of Honor for his actions.

On October 3, 1998, Governor William J. Janklow and Major General Philip Killey dedicated and re-named the South Dakota Veterans Home to the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home (MJFSVH). The MJFSVH stands as a testament to Michael's bravery and leadership.



Thank you Michael for your unending service to this great country and for your on-going support of the men and women who don the uniform!

His citation reads:

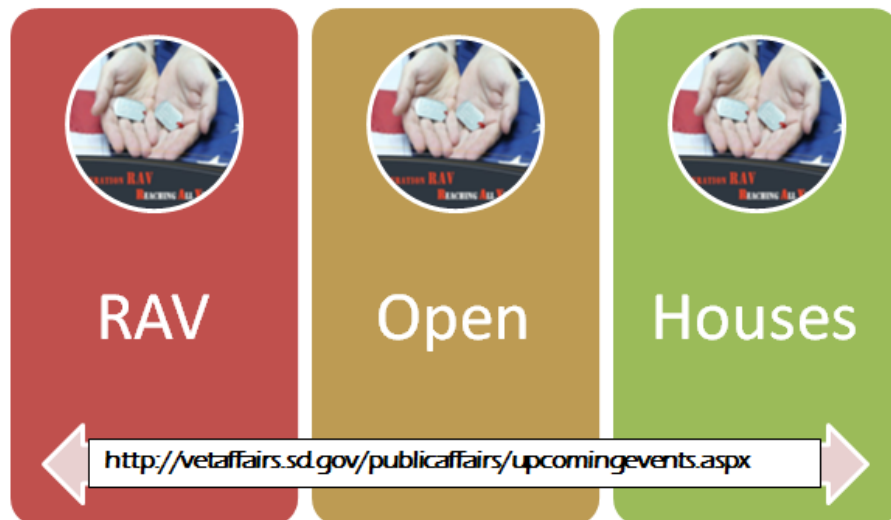
For The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Specialist Fourth Class Michael John Fitzmaurice, United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Troop D, 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), in action against enemy aggressor forces at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 23 March 1971. Specialist Fourth Class Fitzmaurice and three fellow soldiers were occupying a bunker when a company of North Vietnamese sappers infiltrated the area. At the onset of the attack Specialist Fourth Class Fitzmaurice observed three explosive charges which had been thrown into the bunker by the enemy. Realizing the imminent danger to his comrades, and with complete disregard for his personal safety, he hurled two of the charges out of the bunker. He then threw his flak vest and himself over the remaining charge. By this courageous act he absorbed the blast and shielded his fellow-soldiers. Although suffering from serious multiple wounds and partial loss of sight, he charged out of the bunker, and engaged the enemy until his rifle was damaged by the blast of an enemy hand grenade. While in search of another weapon, Specialist Fourth Class Fitzmaurice encountered and overcame an enemy sapper in hand-to-hand combat. Having obtained another weapon, he returned to his original fighting position and inflicted additional casualties on the attacking enemy. Although seriously wounded, Specialist Fourth Class Fitzmaurice refused to be medically evacuated, preferring to remain at his post. Specialist Fourth Class Fitzmaurice's extraordinary heroism in action at the risk of his life contributed significantly to the successful defense of the position and resulted in saving the lives of a number of his fellow soldiers. These acts of heroism go above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit on Specialist Fourth Class Fitzmaurice and the United States Army.



# Upcoming Events

## 2014

Oct. 17— Women Veterans Conference—Holiday Inn City Centre in Sioux Falls  
Nov. 4—SDSU Veterans Combat Support Group—SDSU Student Union 065—6:00 pm  
Nov. 12—Veterans Stand Down—Hall D—Rushmore Plaza Civic Center—Rapid City—2:00-6:00 pm  
Nov. 14-16 Yellow Ribbon Post Deployment Event for the 1742nd Transportation Co.—Sioux Falls  
Dec. 2—SDSU Veterans Combat Support Group—SDSU Student Union 065—6:00 pm  
Dec. 9—SDDVA Mini Conference—Rapid City— Building 450—Camp Rapid (2823 W. Main)—10:00 am  
Dec.. 10—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre Post 8 American Legion (520 S. Pierre Street)—10:00 am  
Dec. 11—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings City/County Building (520 3rd St—Suite 300) - 10:00 am



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